

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image reading apparatus comprising:  
an image reading carriage;  
a reference position pattern element provided on a prescribed location in such a manner that it is able to be read by said image reading carriage which is caused to run; and  
a control section for detecting a reference position based on the reference position pattern element thus read and setting said image reading carriage at a prescribed position based on the reference position thus detected.
2. The image reading apparatus as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a shading plate having a shading pattern formed thereon for performing shading correction, said reference position pattern element being formed on said shading plate at a portion thereof unprovided with said shading pattern.
3. The image reading apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein said reference position pattern element comprises a straight line having an inclination of a prescribed angle with respect to a main scanning direction of said image reading carriage.
4. The image reading apparatus as set forth in claim 3, wherein said reference position pattern element comprises at least two reference position patterns with a prescribed distance provided therebetween in an auxiliary scanning direction of said image reading carriage, said at least two reference position patterns being inclined with respect to said main scanning direction in an opposite relation to each other, and said control section reads said two

reference position patterns by means of said image reading carriage, and detects, as the reference position, the position at which the distance between said two reference position patterns in said main scanning direction becomes a prescribed value.

5. The image reading apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein said control section reads said reference position pattern element by first moving said image reading carriage a predetermined distance forwardly in an auxiliary scanning direction and then moving it rearwardly.

6. The image reading apparatus as set forth in claim 5, wherein said prescribed distance is greater than a distance within which said image reading carriage is able to move before reaching an auxiliary scanning range, and less than a distance within which said image reading carriage is able to move after passing said said auxiliary scanning range.

7. The image reading apparatus as set forth in claim 2, wherein said control section detects the reference position by reading said reference position pattern element by means of said image reading carriage, makes said image reading carriage move a prescribed distance from said reference position to said image reading start position, thereafter further moves it to a shading correction pattern side to perform shading correction, and then moves said image reading carriage to said image reading start position again to make it stand by there until an image reading instruction is given.